



Appropriate Instructional Assignments for Elementary Certified Teachers

The State Board of Education approved new Elementary Certificate Program Standards in 2008. The MDE is currently in the process of reviewing elementary teacher preparation programs based on the new standards. Elementary teachers certificated in Michigan based on the new standards will be prepared to teach all core content areas in **self-contained classrooms in grades K-8**.

Elementary teaching certificates issued before September 1, 1988 are valid for teaching all subjects in grades K-8. Elementary teaching certificates issued after September 1, 1988 are valid for teaching all subjects in grades K-5 and content endorsements in grades 6-8 or all subjects in grades K-8 in a self-contained classroom. Based on the new elementary standards the Michigan Department of Education **recommends** that the holders of these certificates only be assigned to teach departmentalized courses such as music, visual arts, physical education, health, Title I reading, Title I Mathematics, technology, or library media if they hold those endorsements or if they have had appropriate coursework or professional development in the relevant content.

The revised *Administrative Rules Governing the Certification of Michigan Teachers* (November 2006) provide the following definitions that are helpful in determining teaching assignments.

R 390.1101 Definitions.

Rule 1. As used in this code:

- (a) "Certificate endorsement" means subject or subjects that a teacher is authorized to teach at specific grade levels based on completion of appropriate coursework and passage of the appropriate state teacher subject area examination.
- (b) "Departmentalized classroom" means a classroom in which instruction in a specific subject area is provided for a defined period of time.
- (c) "Early childhood certificate endorsement" means a specialization to teach in any school program preceding and including grade 3.
- (d) "Elementary certificate" means an authorization to teach all subjects, kindergarten to and including grade 5, and grade 6 to and including grade 8 in a **self-contained** classroom and may include one or more subject area endorsements or authorizations to teach in grade 6 to and including grade 8 in departmentalized classrooms.
- (r) "Self-contained classroom" means a classroom in which 1 teacher provides instruction to the same pupils for the majority of the pupil's instructional day.

Secondary teaching certificate holders with the 7-8 all subjects designation may also experience similar challenges when assigned outside of content area endorsements.

The following table provides examples of appropriate teaching assignments for elementary certified teachers. For some assignments certificate endorsements are required.

Appropriate Assignment for Elementary Certificated Teacher	Required Certification and Endorsement
Preschool, Michigan School Readiness Program, Early Kindergarten, Transition Kindergarten, Young Fours, as part of the school district's total program.	Elementary Certificate and Early Childhood Education endorsement (ZA)
Developmental reading groups <u>across</u> grade levels K-5.	Elementary Certificate Since Michigan requires reading courses defined by established standards all elementary certified teachers have an appropriate level of knowledge and preparation for this assignment.
Kindergarten through eighth grade self-contained classroom.	Elementary Certificate
K-5 grade level content departmentalized classes for grade mathematics, science, social studies, (e.g., 4 th grade science.)	Elementary Certificate It is recommended that either an endorsement, content specific courses equivalent to a major or minor, or professional development for advanced knowledge be evident for teachers selected to teach departmentalized classes.
K-5 grade level departmentalized classes for physical education, music, visual arts, health, Title I reading, Title 1 math, world languages, technology, or library media.	Elementary Certificate It is highly recommended that either an endorsement, content specific courses equivalent to a major or minor, or professional development for advanced knowledge be evident for teachers selected to teach these classes. Any courses funded through federally funded Title programs require the best prepared teacher be assigned to teach children that are experiencing learning difficulty.